



Remember

Amnesia: The Dark Descent

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House of Gerich

Altstadt has never seen much crime, but there was a dark period spanning from the early winter of 1702 until late summer of 1704. During these years no less than 39 men were arrested and locked up in castle Brennenburg's dungeons. In most cases the criminal's family would be banished from the land, effectively cutting the already dwindling population of Altstadt with 86 souls. The magistrate's office has almost no records detailing these crimes, as most arrests were handled by an unknown nobleman named Wilhelm.

*Klaas Gottschall
University of Königsberg*

The magistrate shuffled through the documents on his desk. Every now and then he would find something, adjust his glasses, and try to decipher the century old handwriting.

"I don't know what to tell you, Herr Gottschall..."

"Please, call me Klaas."

"Herr Klaas, there doesn't seem to be much there."

“I’m aware.”

The magister leaned back in his chair waiting for an explanation. Klaas reached into his bag and produced a thick book and placed it on the desk.

“Are you familiar with *Heritage* by Ludwig Kleist?”

The magister feared a longwinded lecture from the historian sitting across the desk.

“Does it matter?” he answered, realizing how rude it must have come off. Klaas looked confused.

“Can I get you a drink?” continued the magister, hoping he could redeem himself. He quickly got up and headed over to a cabinet and fetched two glasses and bottle of liquor.

“Thank you it’s just that Herr Kleist has done the most thorough investigation into the fate of the House of Gerich,” explained Klaas.

“Who?” The magister began to pour the spirits.

“Wilhelm, the vigilant, was from the House of Gerich.”

“Ah, of course,” said the magister, still confused.

“I want to pick up where he left off.”

“I see where exactly would that be?”

“The book doesn’t really reveal what happened to Wilhelm. It only briefly touches on a few of the cases he worked on during his time in Altstadt. I want to try to find out what happened to him.”

They both raised their glasses and nodded in a silent cheers.

“Fair enough what can the magistrate’s office help you with?”

“Two things. I would like to know if there is anything which supports the claim that Wilhelm was working for the Baron of Brennenburg in order to quell the rise of crime.

Wilhelm remained unknown by most and Kleist argues that he might have been working for the Baron to gain influence in higher circles.”

“Well, that I can tell you, by simply looking at the wall.” The magister stood up and gestured towards a wall of framed documents.

“These are all the proclamations issued by the Brennenburg barony since...” The magister went in for a closer look at the document to the far left. “... since 1599 and none of them mentions such a partnership.”

Klaas studied the handful of framed documents for a moment.

“Excuse me, but it doesn’t really prove that there was no deal, rather that the barony have been a quiet lot.”

“Not quiet – private. If there ever was such a deal, the magistrate’s office wouldn’t know. My point being, I can not help you.”

“That’s a shame.”

“You could ask for an audience with Baron Alexander.”

“I have, but haven’t heard back.”

Lost in thought, Klaas walked over to the window and looked outside. He watched the people on the town square go about their daily life. This is how he preferred to observe the world, from behind a protective window pane.

“What was the other thing?” asked the magister.

“Excuse me?”

“Before, you said there were two things you wanted help with.”

“I need the documents concerning the fire.”

Klaas stepped outside into the square. He took a deep breath, trying to control his discomfort. His eyes jumped across the scene, the laughing young women carrying bags of flour to the bakery, the boy bringing out one of the horses in front of the Inn, the priest waving to an elderly woman.

Klaas turned his head towards the sky and took another deep breath. Open spaces always made him nervous. He knew it was silly, but he couldn't control it. Klaas hurried over to the carriage and climbed inside.

The carriage headed south in search for the old farmstead described in the documents. On Thursday, 28th of September, 1704, there was a fire which consumed a barn a few miles south of Altstadt. It was Wilhelm's last case. The documents procured from the magistrate's office contains a handful of testimonies from witnesses, but it lacks a final statement from Wilhelm. The fates of Wilhelm and the arsonist have never been fully disclosed. A sheriff from Königsberg was sent to investigate Wilhelm's endeavors, but he returned early winter, 1704, reporting that crimes had dropped in Altstadt and that there was no trace of the nobleman.

Ludwig Kleist, the author of *Heritage*, goes to assume the best for all parties.

It stands to reason that we lack information about half of Wilhelm's life. In 1704, when he was but 34 years old, we find the last documents detailing his efforts. Wilhelm had for two years been working for Baron Alexander of Brennenburg as a secret lawman. Baron Alexander, being a knight of the prestigious Order of the Black Eagle, must have realized that the rising crime could not be left to the magistrate and the sheriffs in Königsberg, and acquired assistance from the decorated soldier from Gerich. This arrangement

was most likely not administered by the King, at least not officially; and if investigated would fall apart from a legal standpoint. In 1704, a sheriff from Königsberg were sent to Altstadt to question Wilhelm about the civil arrests he had undertaken. It seems safe to assume that Wilhelm was made to cease his efforts, but was allowed to leave on his own accord, as no documents details this meeting. Considering that the arrival of the sheriff coincides with Wilhelm's last case this fact seems glaringly obvious.

*Excerpt from "Heritage"
Ludwig Kleist*

The carriage turned up a smaller dirt road. Klaas couldn't read any longer as the cart started to bob from side to side. He thought about Kleist's words. He really enjoyed reading Heritage, but there were just so much speculation.

"Master Gottschall, we have arrived," called the driver.

Klaas took a breath and went outside. Countrysides didn't bother him as much. As long as there wasn't too many people around, he could relax. There were two houses standing and one being built. One of the men working, crossed the yard and approached the carriage.

"Hey there!"

"Herr Stoss?" asked Klaas.

"No, there is no Stoss around here. My name is Zimmermann."

"I see, do you mind if I look around? I'm from Königsberg. I'm investigating the fire."

"Fire?"

"Yes, in 1704 there was a large fire here."

Zimmermann laughed.

"1704? That's almost seventy years ago!"

"Yes, I'm well aware."

“Of course, come.” Zimmermann was still holding back his laughter, “What’s your name, Sheriff?”

“Klaas, but I’m not a sheriff, I’m a historian.”

“Now, that sounds about right.”

The site of the fire was considered too much of a hassle to clear, as it was still littered with pieces of burned wood. Zimmermann wasn’t concerned as it worked just fine as a pasture. Klaas wasn’t sure what he was looking for, but was hoping he would turn up something. He looked around the grassland, towards the forest and back at the farmstead. The men were working on the house, while the driver had lit a pipe. What am I doing, he thought. He looked at the documents detailing the event again. He tried to imagine it play out in front of him. The two standing houses were most likely from Stoss’ farm. Klaas was standing where the barn stood. The farmhand, named Emil, torched the barn with his master inside. The fire quickly spread...

Wait a minute. The barn was really large. This must have taken a long time. How come the farmer didn’t save himself and how did Wilhelm show up so quickly?

Wilhelm knew Emil was up to no good. He had one of his men follow Emil that night and caught him as he torched the barn. After alerting the family; Wilhelm’s man had fetched his master to arrest Emil.

The Statement of Dorothea Stoss

Klaas returned to Altstadt. His own suspicions was as unfounded as Kleist’s fairytale, but there was something strange about the whole ordeal. He pushed open the heavy

door leading into the church. The priest was lighting some candles as the cloudy afternoon left the church in the dark.

“Father?” called Klaas.

“Welcome, my son.”

“I need your help.”

“God answers those who pray.”

“Well, yes, this is more worldly. I need insight into the church records. I need to know what happened to Dorothea Stoss.”

“Happened to her? Whatever do you mean?”

“I need to know what happened to the farm after the fire,” pressed Klaas.

“I’m not sure what you are talking about, but Dorothea lived with her daughter, Anna, for years here in Altstadt. She passed away. Must have been fifteen or twenty years ago.”

“Her daughter? Is she still alive?”

Dorothea’s daughter Anna married into the Koch family, in 1718, and moved away from the farmstead. A little more than a decade later, Dorothea moved in with Anna. The farmstead fell into disuse and the land was left unattended for twenty years until it was sold after Dorothea’s death.

Klaas smiled at the treasure trove of information the church archives turned out to be. But there was still little about the actual event or any traces of Emil the farmhand. There was only one way to go, he had to find Anna Koch and hope she had something to say. She was six at the time of the fire and with a bit of luck the event had made an impression on her.

Klaas went outside into the square, he followed the sides so he didn't have to cross it. He felt enough excitement already, he didn't need another panic attack. He turned down the side street and dodged a farmer, with a cart of turnips, heading into town. Anna was a fairly wealthy widow, living with a maid in a modest, but well-kept townhouse. Klaas straightened his jacket, brushed off dust from his sleeves, and knocked on the door. The maid opening the door was a cheerful middle-aged woman. Klaas was invited inside.

“May I offer you something to drink? Are you hungry?”

“Thank you, but no thank you. I was hoping to see Anna Koch.”

“Of course, come, this way.”

The maid showed Klaas into the upstairs drawing room. Anna sat in a rocking chair facing the oriel window. The room was decorated with paintings and porcelain. A fine carpet was splayed across the polished wooden floor. The fireplace cracked comfortingly and immersed the room in a warm glow.

“Anna?” said the maid. “This young man wanted see you. Would that be all right?”

“Yes, of course. What can I do for you?”

“Frau Koch, my name is Klaas Gottschall. I’m from the university in Königsberg. May I ask you a few questions?”

“Please, have a seat.”

Klaas sat down on a robust chair next to her. He looked outside the window. The street outside was nothing but ordinary. One-story houses lined the opposite side of the street, a single sign belonging to the town’s cobbler was the only thing breaking the monotony of residential homes.

“I like watching the world go by,” said Anna.

“I feel the same.”

They sat for a moment watching the street below and the forest beyond the town. The sun was setting and the waning moon was rising.

“Do you remember the fire at the farm?”

“Oh, dear, I haven’t thought about that for years! Why do you ask?”

“I’m trying to find out what happened to Wilhelm and the farmhand...”

“Emil,” she jumped in. “He was such a sweet man.”

“Really, I’m surprised you would say that.”

“How so?”

“He killed your father.”

“Don’t be ridiculous.”

Sometimes Emil had to sleep alone inside the barn. He was twenty years of age, but still afraid of the dark, so I would sneak him some lamp oil he could burn in a tin bowl. He fell asleep with the fire still burning. Later he woke up screaming his lungs out. The barn was on fire. The entire family quickly gathered in the yard, but father being the man he was, decided he was going to save the animals inside. As you well know, he never came out. Emil was crying hysterically. I tried to comfort him, as I didn’t yet realize what had happened. Later, that Wilhelm fellow, arrived with his men telling Emil that he would have to come with them. Us children were sent inside, but mother spoke to the lawmen and later wrote a statement to the magister in town.

Anna Koch, formerly Stoss

“Whatever happened to Emil?”

“Oh, I would say he was rebuked in some manner, but it was an accident and everyone knew so. I can’t imagine him



being punished except by his own sense of guilt.

Klaas considered telling Anna about the harsh words her mother had written about Emil. They most certainly would have him sentenced to a few years in prison. What could he possibly gain from telling her, and what would she do with such information? Klaas decided to keep his words to himself.

What is left? he thought. There is only one more place to go – castle Brennenburg.

As Klaas' carriage rolled through the main gate and into Brennenburg's courtyard, he got the sense of abandonment. Everything was so quiet and serene. Did anyone really live here?

Klaas shut the carriage door behind him and looked around. The courtyard was paved in cobblestone, not the rigid square form like at the university in Königsberg, but the more natural stone found on a rocky sea shore. The castle towered in front of him, a magnificent gothic structure with distinct windows and elaborate parapets.

“Shall I wait, sir?” asked the driver.

“Please, I shan't be long,” answered Klaas. He made his way to the large gate and tapped the heavy door knocker with as much grace as he could.

Old Friends

Herbert made his way through the busy Casbah streets of Algiers. His pale skin burned in the relentless African sun and breathing the thick animal stench, mixed with spices and incense, was exhausting. It was no place for tourists, but Herbert had important business which could not be solved elsewhere. The old town was a labyrinth of narrow streets going up and down the hill, finding your way was anything but easy. To keep the peace and control over the city, there were soldiers in every corner – or rather it was supposed to be. The Casbah remained a bastion for rebels and simply posting guards would not help as they could easily be picked off by assassins. Instead there were large patrols of fifteen or more men marching up and down the already crowded streets.

Even as a European, Herbert was not spared from harassment. He was repeatedly being stopped by patrols asking for papers and had to listen to their friendly advice

about not fraternizing with the locals. The upside of all this was that his French had improved tremendously these last few weeks.

Faraj stood outside the mosque waiting for his foreign friend. He was happy and excited, but did everything in his power to avoid appearing giddy in front of the French patrol. He knew how dangerous the city had become since the French arrived and did not want to draw attention to himself. Tension was high and if the French soldiers would suspect that something had gone awry, they wouldn't hesitate to clear the streets and imprison anyone who protested.

"Faraj," said a pleased voice from behind him.

"Herbert!"

Faraj hugged his friend. They stood there for moment clapping backs brotherly.

"So many years, my friend, so many years," said Faraj.

"I'm so happy to see you again. But this is not the place for pleasantries. Do you have somewhere we can go?" asked Herbert.

"Of course, follow me."

They made their way towards the harbor and took an abrupt turn into an even narrower alleyway.

"I made good time," said Herbert looking at his gold watch.

"Oh, really did you?" laughed Faraj.

"Yes, look, not even six o'clock."

Faraj stopped and looked at the wind-up pocket watch. He turned the screw connected to the spring and tapped at the glass. The arms started turning again. Faraj set the clock to show the right time.

"There you go, my friend."

"Oh," said Herbert disappointed, "I'm sorry."

"Don't worry. Did you have trouble finding the mosque?"

"It was a splendid idea to find each other by looking for the minaret tower. But the streets are so unpredictable. As soon as I thought I had arrived, the street would go off in a different direction. It took me quite some time to find a way leading all the way to the mosque."

"Sounds a lot like the Casbah," said Faraj and laughed.

They arrived on the other side of the alleyway, a larger and much busier street. Peddlers and merchants moved their wares in a long and disjointed street market.

"Do you need anything? I have a cousin selling the finest carpets in Algiers. Or maybe a new watch?" teased Faraj.

"Hah! Thank you, but I'm trying to plan a trip to the desert."

Faraj stopped and looked serious for a moment.

"Are you going, Herbert, are you really?" he said unable to hold back his smile.

"Signed and paid for by the British Museum."

Faraj laughed in triumph.

"You crazy infidel. How do you do it?"

"I told them I had a map," said Herbert with a straight face. Faraj seemed to lose his steam, replacing his joy with determination.

"We shouldn't be talking about this in the streets. Come this way."

Captain Ambroise of the French army moved his patrol through the busy harbor. Call it instinct or experience, he knew something was a foot. There was something about the

merchandise the loaders moved. Why were there so many sealed crates? The majority of the goods shipped to Algiers was grain and oil. Barrels and sacks was a common sight, not unmarked board crates.

“You there!” Ambroise called out to a loader on the docks. “What are you moving?”

“I don’t know, it’s not mine.” he answered.

“I need to see the custom’s slip for these items immediately.”

The words fell on deaf ears. The men kept moving the goods. Ambroise followed the men carrying the crates with his eyes. They all moved goods from a single cebec, a small and fast ship common in these parts of the world. Ambroise eyed the growing pile of crates on the docks.

“Is there a problem, captain?” asked a calm Arab behind him. Ambroise turned around to face the man.

“Perhaps. Are these yours?”

“Yes, yes they are.” The man nodded to his workers to start loading the crates on a wagon.

“Nobody touches the crates, until I get some answers around here,” yelled Ambroise.

“My name is Abd-al-Qadir Bahij and here is my papers identification, customs and tariff slip.”

“Open one.”

“Captain, they have already been checked and accounted for by the customs. The customs controlled by your government.”

“I don’t care. Open one,” Ambroise gestured to his men.

“Captain, you are performing a criminal act by opening that crate. It is not your business.”

"My business is the Casbah and what you are trying to smuggle into it!"

"No need to get upset, Captain. It says so right on the customs slip foodstuff!"

The crate creaked as the soldiers cracked it open. "Captain?" said one of the soldiers. "It's grain, sir." Bahij and Ambroise looked at the long open crate. It looked like a small coffin filled with grain. Ambroise noticed that Bahij held his breath a moment before he exhaled. Ambroise turned around and kicked the open crate over. The grain poured out exposing a stack of rifles.

Faraj poured Herbert some tea and sat down on the pillowed seat. Herbert looked awkward sitting on the floor. Faraj snickered at his attempts at keeping a straight back.

"I'm glad my troubles entertain you. Posture is important, you know?" labored Herbert.

"You need more pillows?" offered Faraj.

"Thank you, I will be all right." Herbert glanced around the room. It was as comfortable as a drawing room, but it looked nothing like the ones found in Europe.

"Lokum?" Faraj held out a plate of sweets.

"Delights! Don't mind if I do," said Herbert and picked up one of the sweets.

"I forget, you are British. Turkish Delights, am I right?"

"Yes, that's what we call them." Herbert finished his delight and quickly went for another one.

"Careful with the rose flavored ones, they are said to ease your mind, but also make you forget things."

"I'm old my memory is already abandoning ship," jested Herbert. Faraj sipped on his tea. He was happy having his

friend in his home. It saddened him that they would have to engage in business instead of merriment.

“Herbert, do you really think you will be able to pull this off?”

“The expedition? Most certainly.”

“What have you told your people in London?” asked Faraj.

“The truth. That we are going to find the legendary tomb of Tin Hinan.”

Faraj was worried that Herbert did not fully appreciate the situation.

“Herbert, I told you. It is bigger than that.”

“Faraj, don’t worry. I remember what you told me about Johann Weyer and his research. I know you think it is important.”

Faraj smiled, feeling silly that he would ever doubt his friend.

“You realize what this means? They could all be travelers. Even God could be a concept from the beyond, brought to us by missionaries, like it was brought to the natives in the Americas. Maybe they are speaking to him, like an ordinary man. Wouldn’t you like to speak to – no with, the almighty!”

Herbert fell silent. He didn’t know how to handle religion. The Church of England had never impressed him and when he had looked beyond the borders of the kingdom, all religions became mythical. He had never found God and it concerned him. He wanted to sympathize with Faraj, but couldn’t.

“Well,” said Herbert, “I guess we’ll find out.”

Faraj calmed down once again, ashamed to have worked himself up so much. Especially in front of a friend with such



composure. Herbert never got riled up, thought Faraj.

He produced a map and splayed it on the floor in front of them. It was a printed map of the northern desert. Faraj had made extensive notes on it describing the exact route.

"Where is all this information from?" said Herbert pointing at the notes.

"From here and there, but..."

Faraj turned the map over revealing the back covered in sketches and more notes.

"... these are all from Weyer."

"What is this?" Herbert pointed at a star-shape.

"Weyer describes it as a marker," answered Faraj.

"For what?"

"Who knows?"

Faraj pointed at another sketch of a circle and a hand.

"Now, this. This is the key."

Ambroise ordered the men to fire at the fleeing rebels. Raiding Abd-al-Qadir Bahij's granaries and storehouses had stirred up a hornets' nest of resistance. Countless of French soldiers had reinforced the already crowded battle and the harbor had turned into a killing field. The rebels scattered and fled into the narrow streets.

"After them! Let's quench this rebellion, once and for all!" screamed Ambroise and pushed his patrol up the Casbah hill.

Four young men suddenly invaded Faraj's home. Herbert and Faraj could hear them storm the entrance.

"Uncle, you must run, they are killing everyone!" shouted one of them from the other room. Faraj got to his feet and hurried to see what it was all about. His nephew Baki came into the room. Baki pointed accusingly at Herbert.

“Uncle, what are you doing? He is one of them!”

“No, Baki. He is not like them. He is English.”

“He is European!”

Baki pulled a dagger and pushed Faraj out of the way. Herbert didn’t understand a word and feared for his life.

“Baki,” called one of the men from the other room, “they are coming. We must go!”

“Don’t hurt him, please,” pleaded Faraj.

The patrol was waiting patiently for their compatriots to lure out the rebels. Two ranks were formed, five men in front kneeling, five men in the back standing. They had their rifles ready and waited for Ambroise’s saber to come down, ordering them to shoot.

The four rebels emerged from the house with a white man held as hostage.

“Put your weapons away, or we kill this man,” yelled Baki holding his knife demonstratively next to Herbert.

“Please, don’t!” cried Faraj from the side.

“Ready! Aim!...” called Ambroise to his men.

The threat turned the rebels frantic, but had little time to react. The street was narrow – they were trapped. Faraj stepped out between the two sides.

“Stop this madness!”

Ambroise let his saber fall in a swift movement.

“Fire!”

Faraj felt himself hit the ground. What was happening? Everything had gone silent. His eyes focused. Baki’s lifeless body laid collapsed on the ground just a few feet away. They had killed Baki. What a waste of life. He tried to look around to

see the others, but he couldn't move his head. Had they all been killed? Faraj realized he wasn't feeling well, mostly because he didn't feel anything at all. He prayed that Herbert was safe.

"Faraj, can you hear me?"

"Yes, Herbert, I hear you, my friend. Are you all right?"

Herbert knew it was bad. He took Faraj's hand and held it close to his chest.

"Herbert, you are... unhurt," smiled Faraj. "Saved by the color of your skin."

Herbert hung his head in shame.

"Farewell, Faraj, my friend."

Faraj exhaled, his head fell back on the ground. Herbert reached out to close his eyelids.

"*Dégages!*" One of the soldiers kicked Herbert.

"*Européen!*" yelled Herbert.

"Get out of here, stupid Englishman. Before I shoot you."

"You just shot my friend...!"

The soldier fired a warning shot. Herbert quickened and fled into the narrow Casbah streets. He ran like never before, back to the hotel and the safety of his luxurious hotel room.

Herbert sat with his assistant Daniel in the hotel restaurant. Daniel noticed that Herbert was quiet this evening, but thought little of it. He picked up the week old London Times and began to read. It was the same articles he had read the day before.

"I think, I'll be turning in. Good night, Professor."

Herbert mumbled and made a small gesture with his hand. Daniel left and went upstairs.

Ambroise came up to the table and dropped the map in front of Herbert. He sat down in Daniel's seat and took a sip from his drink. Herbert didn't know what to think. He quickly reached for the map. Before he could collect it, Ambroise tossed a stone onto the map. The gilded table below resonated with a clang. Herbert looked around with a slight panic and then down on the map and the star-shaped stone.

"What is that?" asked Herbert.

"That is my question," he answered dryly. "You are lucky there are so few Brits in Algeria, Professor."

"What do you want?"

"I want to know what it is. And why is there a picture of this stone on the back of your map?"

Herbert was speechless. He really didn't know much. Tin Hinan, was that it? He didn't believe that, there was more. It was what Tin Hinan might have been. Where she came from, where she went.

"I understand," said Ambroise. "You wouldn't want to tell me. We are not exactly best friends. Know this, this stone has been in my family for something like three centuries, ever since the siege of Calais. It has fueled the men in my family with great spirit, but also madness. You know, inspiration to the point of obsession. I never really bought into the whole thing, but I must admit seeing you with this fills me with a sense of purpose and closure."

"Are you giving this to me?" Herbert was dumbfounded.

"I'm not doing you a favor Englishman. This is for my father and my father's father and so on. It is on you now. Good luck."

Herbert and the expedition left the next morning, heading off into the Algerian desert. He would never forget the pain of losing Faraj or the strange meeting with the French officer. The map constantly reminding him of the sacrifices made and the stone — determination lasting centuries.

With the Blessing of a King

It was in the year of our Lord 1558 when Johann Weyer entered the liberated city of Calais in the very north of France. Many men with various esoteric knowledges have claimed that Weyer was responsible for the successful occupation, but little evidence has ever been presented to support such high claims. For all we know his presence during this important period in Calais' history is nothing but circumstantial. What is known without doubt, is that the city had been reconquered by France, and Queen Mary of England would mourn the loss of Calais until her death later that year.

It was early morning and the sun flooded the city with bright orange light. Weyer's horse trotted down the muddy cobbled stoned streets. It was evident that the city had seen battle, not because of the ruined houses or the tattered banners hanging limp from the city walls, it was something in the air. As if all the tension city-life creates had been washed away by a storm and left a great void behind.

Weyer stopped and pulled back his hood, revealing his rugged face. He looked weary and he always did. It was something he couldn't escape. It had nothing to do with his physique and everything to do with the things he studied. He carried an awful amount of truth on his shoulders and he wished he could put it down, if just for a moment.

He looked at his map and back up at the skyline. The watch tower at *Place d'Armes* rose above the commerce district to the west and the great cathedral the English had built was just up ahead. He was close according to his sources.

"Salut!"

Three French soldiers on horseback, further down the street, demanded his attention. The short salutation was in itself friendly – it was the way it was said which worried him. He waited for the men to approach.

"Greetings," he said in German.

The three men seemed taken aback by the choice of language and chortled. Weyer noticed that one of the men's uniforms was slightly more decorated than the others. Quickly it became apparent that he was the leader of the patrol.

"Are you lost, Inlander?" asked the captain.

"So it seems – but not in the way you think."

"This is occupied ground!" he yelled, not pleased with the enigmatic answer.

Weyer tried to weigh the situation. He didn't want to risk involving more innocent people, but it seemed like he would have to give in a little. He reached into his saddlebag. The soldiers quickly unsheathed their swords. Weyer produced a scroll and unfolded it.

"I have a right to be here," he proclaimed.

The captain remained skeptical, but guided his horse forward and picked up the letter. He read it carefully, to not miss anything which would give him the upper hand. As the letter ended he was left without leverage. The insignia of Henri II, his king, stared back at him.

“*Où est-ce que vous l'avez cherché?*” he mumbled frustrated. “I mean, have you looked around yet, for this church the letter mentions?”

“I just arrived. I haven’t had...”

“*Bien sûr,*” the captain interrupted, “we will make sure you find it.”

“Thank you, it won’t be necessary. If you would just let me...”

The captain looked Weyer squarely in the eyes.

“We will make sure you find it.”

The church looked old, much older and smaller than the giant spectacle the English had erected. Weyer estimated it was from the 12th century, but it had been repaired extensively over the last few hundred years. A heavy double door of oak stood untouched by the violence which had plagued the city. Weyer pulled at the handle, but found it locked. The captain pushed Weyer aside and pounded the door yelling in undecipherable French. He put his ear to the door and listened.

“*L’Anglais,*” he said quietly to his men and moved around the church. Weyer kept his distance, not knowing what to expect.

Suddenly the French soldiers breached a side door and rushed inside. There was a lot of yelling. Weyer couldn’t understand, he heard the captain demanding surrender and a

couple of voices pleading for mercy. He reached the door and looked inside. Two men sat on their knees on the church floor begging. One of them was a priest and the other one an English soldier. The captain ordered his men to look for others.

“There are no more,” cried the priest. The soldier kept eyeing his sword just a few feet away. Weyer stepped into the church and looked around. The captain’s men seemed content there were no more hiding inside the church.

“Do you have any use for them?” asked the captain.

“No. It would be better if they weren’t here.”

“Vrais.”

The captain quickly stabbed with his sword into the soldier kneeling in front of him. The blade thrust down through the shoulder all the way down to the abdomen. The soldier looked shocked and confused. As the captain pulled his sword out, the englishman collapsed on the ground. Weyer held his breath as he stared at the dying man. No matter how many strange things Weyer witnessed, he never found anything so abhorrent as the acts of a common man. The spontaneous cruelty and the indifference when making life altering decisions for others was incomprehensible to him.

“Don’t kill me, please!” cried the priest.

Weyer knew what the captain would do so he did what so many others do when faced with cruelty he closed his eyes and walked away.

The crypt was unusually large for such a small church, but Weyer was anything but surprised. He studied the space carefully. The statuettes by the walls had been removed completely. The zodiac centerpiece, most likely a bull, had

been replaced by a single waist-high tomb aligned with the length of the room. The ceiling was bare, but plastered, effectively hiding all evidence of the room's true purpose. It didn't matter, as long as the orb chamber was intact. The protruding stone slab in the far end wall gave every indication that it was so.

The captain and his men descended from the stairs.

"Are you going to tell me what is going on here?"

Weyer tried to think of something clever and walked over to the tomb.

"This is... was a very important man."

He brushed the dust off with his sleeve so he could see the man's name.

"Pilgrimage? Is that your story, Inlander?" The captain came closer. "You wait a few years in hope that the city shall fall into French hands, so you can use your connection with the king to get permission to visit a tomb?"

"He was very import..." the captain grabbed Weyer by the neck and pushed him onto the tomb.

"Look, Inlander, you better start talking. Do you think I care if you steal something from the church? Hell, I just killed a priest!"

"What... what do you want?" gasped Weyer.

"I want my share."

Weyer looked into the captain's fierce eyes and saw nothing worth saving. He then looked at the other two soldiers and tried to weigh their worth. Will I die, he thought, if I do nothing? Can I save the other two somehow?

"All right, but you will have to help me."

The captain released Weyer from his grip and laughed.

"Avec plaisir!"

Sokal tried to swallow, but his nerves had made his mouth dry, and this tongue felt swollen. He could not understand the language the captain and the stranger, Johann Weyer, spoke. The two seemed to reach an agreement and the stranger gestured him towards the stone slab in the center of the far end wall. Sokal followed the silent order. The stone wall looked ordinary enough, he thought, and tapped gently with his fingers on the surface. What was he supposed to find?

The stranger approached and started to speak. He studied the edges of the stone. A faint decorative border of semiprecious stones, fitted into the wall, framed the larger stone slab. The stranger traced the border until he happened upon a strange star-shaped soapstone. He picked at the edges with his nails, but to no avail.

“Help him, you fool,” said the captain to Sokal.

He remained in the dark. All Sokal knew was that they were about to desecrate holy ground. It couldn’t be helped, the captain wouldn’t accept him talking back. We are at war, for God’s sake, he will have me charged with treason — unless he kills me on the spot.

Sokal sat down on the floor to get a better look at the star-shaped soapstone, unsheathed a knife, and began to peck at the edges. After a few moments it came loose, dropped out of its place, and into his hand.

The stranger thanked him and pushed him aside. Sokal studied the peculiar stone in his hand. He felt a tremendous link to history, imagining himself standing on the same spot, thousands of years ago, without a trace of civilization to be found.



The stranger imitated a lifting motion and pointed at the stone.

“Si’l vous plait,” mustered the stranger.

The french soldiers looked at each other and laughed. They couldn’t possibly lift the stone by themselves.

“Non, non, de rien,” he said and continued to speak in german to the captain as he gestured toward the hole he had been tampering with. The captain nodded towards the soldiers.

Sokal and his compatriot lifted the stone without effort. It shifted with the same ease as lifting one side of an evenly balanced scale. They smiled triumphantly and looked back at the pleased captain. The stranger still looked full of doubt and pulled something from his robe.

A metallic wail came from inside the wall. The stranger called out to the soldiers as the chain holding the counterweight snapped with a sonorous crack. The stone slab came crashing down, striking Sokal’s shoulder. He fell to the ground, almost passing out from the pain.

“I can’t move my arm,” cried Sokal.

“Walk it off, child,” the captain denigrated.

“Look, he is securing it right now,” he continued.

The stone slab had stopped half-way down. The stranger had managed to place a metallic wedge between the wall and the stone as it fell. He produced another wedge from his robe and secured the other side as well.

Sokal leaned back at the side of the tomb. His broken body ached, but resting helped a little. He watched the captain, the stranger, and his compatriot enter the opening. Sokal was left with a lantern and he tried his best to see what

they saw. He followed the torches' burning glow as the men ventured further into the thick darkness.

A faint glimmer appeared. Sokal got excited, what was he missing in there. He could hear their distant voices.

"Un sphere? Magnifique!"

The blue light was beautiful. Sokal wanted so badly to see what could be the source of such wonder.

"What is it? What's going on?!" he called.

There was no answer to his question. He could hear them talk all excited. Except the stranger. Why wasn't he as happy?

Sokal felt uneasy and struggled into a stand. He limped over to the opening and noticed the star-shaped soapstone on the floor. He reached down and grabbed it. That's when he realized they had gone silent.

"Hey, guys!" he shouted.

The room exploded in blue light and a torrent of sound. Sokal saw the captain holding an orb in his hands, it pulsed violently with light. They were all smiling, except for the stranger. The stranger remained at the side making strange signs with his hands.

"Sorcery?"

The orb forced a tempest of light and sound inside the chamber. The light was rich burgundy and the sound was like the lament of an old forgotten god.

They all cried out in a maddening chant. The light took form of a bloating and pulsating mass which dug into their flesh. Weyer, the stranger, pulled the orb from the captain's hands and stormed off towards the entrance.

Sokal had tears running down his cheeks, he couldn't control himself. In fear he watched his friends disappear into the brooding abomination.

Weyer came into the crypt and pulled out the first wedge. The second one was seemingly impossible to move. It was fixed to the architecture and simply wouldn't let go. The thing inside grew and pushed towards the entrance.

Weyer screamed in frustration as the wedge wouldn't release. Sokal unsheathed his sword and pushed Weyer to the ground. He swung the sword around and struck the last wedge with a massive blow. The wedge shattered and the stone slab slammed into the floor sealing off the chamber.

Sokal fell to his knees exhausted. He looked at Weyer, pleading with his tear drenched eyes. Why would you show us this?

"I am sorry. *Je suis désolé*," said Weyer.

Sokal cried, still clenching the sword in his one good hand. Weyer picked up the legendary orb lying next to the star-shaped soapstone, headed up the stairs, and stepped out into the recovering city of Calais.

Waiting for the Rain

Elise watched the digger fill the grave of her brother Friedrich. He had been sick for almost a month before he finally passed away. Typhoid fever was not something she had heard of before, so it meant nothing to her, and at the same time, it meant everything. Watching her brother die, had made her realize that she was miserable. Not because of this particular tragedy, it was her life and the people she shared it with, which made it so.

Her father Gustaf swallowed his sorrow the best he could. He loved his only son desperately and his death was nothing he was prepared to handle. This was something which had become painfully clear to the entire family as they had watched Gustaf fall into despair.

Elise ran her hand up the other arm to comfort the sore muscle. Her father had pulled at her arm just before the funeral, as she wasn't moving quickly enough.

“Why couldn’t it been one of the girls,” whispered Gustaf to his wife Agathe. They all heard him, but said nothing. Agathe just stood there cradling her youngest child in her arms with a faraway look in her eyes. Tears ran down Margarethe’s cheek. She was the oldest child now and she tried to stay composed, but hearing her father wish something so terrible made it impossible.

Elise also felt the sting of her father’s words and turned away. She looked over to the church and the town square beyond.

Just behind the church she saw a young boy sitting and digging in the dirt with his hands. She carefully removed herself from the funeral, knowing well she wouldn’t be missed.

Tinker, the black cat, sat on a narrow tombstone and studied Jacob’s effort. Elise stroked the black cat which arched from discomfort. The humid weather was already making the thick fur unbearable and he certainly didn’t need anyone touching him.

“What are you doing?” asked Elise. Jacob looked up at his visitor.

“I’m planting an apple tree next to mother. It’s going to rain soon, you know? Best time to sow – before rain.”

Elise looked back at the funeral. It was still going on.

“I’m sorry about your brother,” continued Jacob.

“Thank you.”

Elise gazed up into the gloomy sky. A single drop of rain struck her cheek. She prepared for the rain to come crashing down, but it didn’t.

“I don’t remember much about my mother, but I know she loved apples.”

Elise couldn't concentrate on what Jacob was saying. Her mind was preoccupied.

"Do you ever think of running away from your family?" she asked.

"I don't have much to run from anymore."

"I mean, this life, your master, the Innkeeper."

Jacob thought about it for a moment. He was content with the life he lived. He had a good stable where he could sleep, and a master which kept him fed and clothed. He looked at Elise, the sad girl in her Sunday dress, a friend he cared deeply for.

"I'll go with you, if you want."

She giggled.

"I know you would. You are my best friend," she said blushing.

Jacob patted the tiny mound of dirt covering the apple seeds.

"Why won't it rain?" wondered Jacob.

"Maybe God doesn't see anything worth crying about."

"Elise! Come over here this instant!" yelled her father.

"I have to go, Jacob."

"Elise, you won't leave without saying good bye, will you?"

She smiled back at Jacob.

"I won't I promise."

The wagon rolled down the country road. Elise swayed with the motion, holding on to the side to keep herself on board. Gustaf mainly used the wagon to transport hay for the cows, but it worked well for the family when visiting Altstadt. As Elise watched the landscape pass by, she found herself

entertaining the thought of escape. Is it really possible? Could she find another life for herself?

She imagined showing up at the stables next to the Inn, the surprised look on Jacob's face as she tells him that she has run away. She played the scene over and over in her head. Jacob's reaction was always the same, a surprise turned into absolute joy. Then they would pack his things and head out, probably joining Gabriel on a journey to Königsberg or somewhere equally exciting.

The wagon hit another large pothole, forcing her back to reality. Elise abandoned her daydream and sighed. Up ahead she could see her home – Gustaf Zimmerman's farm.

Gustaf overturned the dining table in a swift movement, utensils and plates scattered over the floor.

“Are we really going to eat? On a day like this?! Show some damn respect, Agathe!”

He shook her hard and pushed her to the floor.

“You make me sick, all of you!”

Agathe and her girls kept still, stiffened with fear, her baby crying in the crib. Gustaf pulled at his hair, not knowing what to do with himself, and stormed out. Margarethe helped her mother up on her feet.

“Mother, I have thought about it, I will marry Immanuel after all. I think it would help out with the money.”

Agathe kissed Margarethe on her forehead.

“I knew you would come to your senses, you are a good girl. Something I wish all my girls would be,” she said while eyeing Elise.

Elise walked across the yard, climbed the fence to the pasture, zigzagged between the cows, and continued towards the great oak. The cows never did go all the way up to the trunk of the tree, as the ground was covered in knotty roots. She used to do a bit of climbing when she was younger, but now it had become a place for hiding the things which mattered most.

Elise reached into the hollow trunk and pulled out a bundle, unwrapped it and revealed; several pieces of burned wood, a button carrying a decorative insignia, and a broken flintlock pistol. They were all things she had found around father's land and she used to look at them and pretend they belonged to her. The things told so many stories. Sometimes she was the soldier helping a young maiden from a burning house. Sometimes she was the one being saved. It didn't matter anymore. She didn't need to live her life through an event which had happened years before even her grandfather was born. She was going to have her own life now. Realizing she no longer needed the things, she wrapped the bundle, and put it back in the hollow tree trunk.

Elise had started to prepare her escape. She had packed clothes in an empty potato sack and was waiting for the right opportunity to fetch provisions in the kitchen.

She paced up and down the yard trying to get an idea of where the family members and the two farmhands were. It was important that no one knew about her plan, because they would stop her and punish her.

Gustaf was behind the house chopping wood, she could hear it echo across the farm. The two farmhands were loading

pails of fresh milk into the root cellar. Her older sister pumped water from the well.

Finally her mother stepped into the yard carrying buckets to her sister. This is it. Hurry! she thought. With steadfast determination she entered the house. She opened the pantry, grabbed half a loaf of bread, and a couple of potatoes.

As her mother and sister returned with the water, Elise flung herself out of the window. She quickly got to her feet, picked up the sack of provisions and headed towards the pasture.

“Where do you think you are going!” yelled Gustaf from behind her.

Elise started to run, she heard her father coming after her. She threw the sack over the pasture fence and began to climb it. Gustaf’s hand grabbed her shoulder and yanked her backwards. She hit the ground hard – her head was spinning and she felt nauseated. Her vision slowly returned. Gustaf was standing beside her. He still had his axe, it was hanging from his gripped right hand.

“What are you doing Elise? Are you running away? Are we not good enough for you anymore?”

His voice was manic. She couldn’t answer without feeling like she needed to vomit. It didn’t matter, he wouldn’t let her anyhow.

“I get it now. You killed him. Your work is done.”

Elise rolled over to stand up. Gustaf kicked her in the stomach and she fell backwards.

“I knew it. You are not my daughter. You are an Erkling – a Changeling. You had us all fooled, didn’t you?”

With a violent crack followed by the rolling rumble of thunder, the sky opened and the rain began to drain the land.



Elise struggled to get to her feet, while heavy drops of rain smothered her. Gustaf, her father, pushed his foot down on her throat.

“Please, dad...,” cried Elise, with her last breath.

“I will purge your wicked soul from this body,” declared Gustaf, raising his axe. As he looked down into his helpless daughter’s eyes, he felt his madness slowly escape him. What am I doing, he thought.

As Gustaf’s resolve disappeared, he removed his foot from her throat. Elise scrambled onto her feet and began to run across the yard and down the muddy road towards Altstadt.

“I’m sorry, I lost my head,” shouted Gustaf after her.

Elise was not about to trust him again. She had lost her sack of clothes and provisions, but it would be all right. If only she could make her way to Altstadt and Jakob.

Gustaf was closing in fast. She wasn’t getting away. He would kill her, maybe not today, but eventually.

She stopped, still feeling sick and out of breath. She looked back at her father; he had stopped further up the road. He was staring in her direction, but beyond her. She looked back at the road and in the distance she could see a carriage coming this way.

A great sense of hope filled her. Someone is coming someone is coming to help me. I just know it.

The Outrider

Gabriel looked behind him to see how the carriage handled the winding forest road. The journey had been long and these last few miles had been the longest. The Englishman had chartered the carriage to take him from Bremen to Altstadt near the eastern border of Prussia. The driver had not been thrilled by the prospect, but was swayed as the man kept offering more money. Gabriel worked as an outrider, following carriages on horseback, helping out with scouting paths and keeping the peace. Like the driver, he had also been hesitant to embark on such a long journey. In the end, it was the destination which had enticed Gabriel to come along. Out of all towns, the Englishman had chosen Gabriel's hometown, the small hamlet known as Altstadt.

"It's just up ahead," Gabriel called back to the carriage.

“You see Englishman, I told you we’d make it before nightfall,” cackled the driver.

Gabriel looked up into the dark sky. They were cutting it close. The fiery red horizon was all that was left and soon it would be snuffed out too. He waited for the carriage to pass and followed it into the town.

Jacob was far from being a man, yet he already worked the stables at Der Mühle, the only guest house in town. Altstadt was never particularly busy, not even during market days, and Jacob spent most of his time being bored. He walked across the town square to the community well. A black cat sat on the rough stone work and peered into the darkness below.

“Hi there, Tinker, found any mice lately?”

The cat was unfazed by Jacob’s presence and kept staring into the well. Jacob sighed and stroked the black cat’s sleek fur. Suddenly, he heard the rattling noise of a horse-drawn carriage in the distance and got excited.

“Someone’s coming!” he called into the guest house.

The carriage thundered into the square and came to a halt in front of Der Mühle. The driver pulled the brake and climbed down from his seat, stretching his worn body with great pain, and swung open the carriage door.

“Englishman,” he said, “we have arrived.”

Out climbed a thin and considerably tired man. He muttered and gestured towards the luggage.

“Allow me, sir,” grumbled the driver and pulled down the luggage.

Jacob tugged at the leather straps and unbuckled the carriage horses. He noticed that the outrider following the

carriage had stopped to hoist some water from the well. Jacob left the horses and walked over to the lone rider.

“Gabriel, is it really you?”

“Good to see you again, Jacob.”

“I was beginning to think you’d never return. It’s been well over a year.”

The Innkeeper came out to greet the Englishman and make sure everything was in order. Feeling his master’s eyes on him, Jacob sprang to action and hurried off with the horses towards the stable.

“Come inside and have something to drink and eat,” said the Innkeeper. “You too, Gabriel.”

The light of day had passed and Jacob was finally done. Exhausted, he sat down on the ground in front of the entrance. It had been a good day after all and tomorrow was going to be even better. Drivers, outriders, and not to mention visitors, always had the best stories. When they had rested he was going to hear them all.

Tinker, the black cat, passed by in front of him.

“Hey, Tinker, come here come here Tinker.”

The black cat glanced at Jacob and then continued on his way towards the church.

“You’re no fun.”

Gabriel stepped out of the guest house and sat down next to Jacob.

“What are you still doing up?”

“The horses they take time,” answered Jacob.

“Here,” said Gabriel and handed him an apple.

“Thank you. You know, we don’t get this kind of apple around here. The only ones we have are tough and sour.”

“You should plant the seeds after you’ve eaten it then.” Jacob looked at it for a moment, smiled, and pocketed it. “Maybe I will.”

Jacob got up on his feet and brushed the dust off himself. He picked up a pebble and flung it through the air and hit the well. Gabriel chortled and patted his jacket in search for his pocket watch. The Englishman had given it to him after coming to the conclusion that it was broken. Gabriel knew it was unlikely he would ever get around to it, but he wanted to have it repaired. It was a nice watch even though he couldn’t figure out why it had the name “Herbert” engraved. He was fairly sure the Englishman said his name was Daniel.

A terrifying yowl shook them both. It turned into a violent hiss.

“Tinker?” said Jacob and made his way towards the church.

“Damn cats.” Gabriel wiped his brow. He put the watch back into his pocket and stood up. He heard Jacob call out to someone.

“Hey! You there, what are you doing?”

Gabriel moved closer and saw a dark figure shove the black cat into a sack.

“Let him go!” called Gabriel.

The thing swung its arm around and struck Jacob. He fell to the ground. Gabriel ran over to Jacob. Blood seeped from his nose and he was barely conscious. The thing struggled to keep the black cat inside the burlap sack. It was dressed in a large cloak and reeked of clove and sage. Gabriel found himself staring. It seemed unreal somehow.

“Who are you?” he said under his breath.

The thing rose and stretched its limbs. Its face remained hidden behind the cloak, but its moldering hands were revealed in the silver moonlight. They looked twisted and unnatural. As if the bones had grown past what nature intended.

“Whiiii...!” it shrieked into the night.

The shattering cry woke Gabriel from his daze and he grabbed Jacob by the hand and pulled the young boy towards the stables. Gabriel dropped the boy in the hay, grabbed the spare rifle from the carriage, and returned to the square. The thing had disappeared, but Gabriel felt a need to deal with it. He couldn’t let it go, it reminded him too much of the thing his father went after.

Gabriel returned to the front of the church where he had confronted the thing. A faint scent remained from the strange herb combination. He followed it down the side of the church and stopped to listen.

A sudden cry from the black cat gave Gabriel a sense of direction and he began to run. He passed the last house and emerged in a small pasture separating Altstadt from the forest. The dark thing shambled across the uneven ground.

Kill it before it escapes into the forest, his mind cried out to him. Gabriel raised his gun, took aim and fired. The rifle stock struck his shoulder as it recoiled. The bullet rushed across the pasture and lodged itself in a pine tree.

Herr Zell, the cooper, had been startled by the muffled crack outside his home. He picked up a lantern and stepped outside. A man stood in the pasture with a rifle at his side.

“What is going on out here?”

Gabriel turned to face the startled townsman. What could he say, he reasoned — tell him that a monster from his past had revealed itself?

“It’s that thing, isn’t it?” shuddered Zell. Gabriel exhaled, relieved, and looked back at the forest.

“It only comes at night. It’s one of them lost souls. They come for the animals. They collect them.”

“I’ve seen it before. A long time ago, when I was boy,” said Gabriel. “Are there really more than one?”

Zell seemed to give it some thought.

“Who knows? Maybe it’s just the one,” figured Zell.

Gabriel looked up into the moonlit sky and then back at the dark forest across the pasture.

“I could use your lantern.”

Gabriel ran through the forest. He was already regretting his decision. He was tracing the footsteps of his father, and he knew it. It was he who had brought the lantern that night and watched him step into the darkness — never to return.

Gabriel waded across a shallow brook running through a ravine, climbed its rocky side, and continued even deeper into the forest. Suddenly he saw the thing, with its burlap sack shifting from side to side. It was heading for an opening — a cave. Gabriel dared a careful smile of triumph. He readied his rifle again and took aim.

The shot echoed through the sleeping forest. The thing arched backwards in pain and dropped the burlap sack. Tinker, the black cat, tumbled out of the sack, and leapt to safety up a nearby tree. Gabriel watched closely from the distance, waiting for the thing to fall over. It didn’t.



Instead the thing shambled into the cave. Gabriel quietly cursed under his breath and pushed forward. He was shaking from fear and the cold water which had soaked his legs as he had crossed the brook. He tried to control his breathing, but he couldn't and the air stuttered in and out of him.

As he came closer, he noticed that the cave was glowing. Whatever that thing was it had lit up the cave with fire. He glanced at Tinker perched on a branch above him. The black cat seemed to peer into his soul, urging him to take vengeance. Gabriel peeked inside. The wounded thing picked up a torch from a metal holder fixed to the cavern wall. He could see that the tunnel was fitted with more holders, but this was the only one with a lit torch. The terrible thing turned around and looked directly at Gabriel, who was transfixed by its presence. Suddenly it dropped its torch, made a swift lunge at Gabriel, and thrust its bony fingers into Gabriel's chest and lifted his body. He cried out in pain and tugged at its cloak. And with a cruel twist of fate, Gabriel unveiled its hideous face. Its skin had given in to the weight of the flesh and collapsed like hot wax on a candle over the misshaped skull.

Gabriel panicked, kicked with his legs, and smashed the lantern against the thing's face. The lantern cracked open, shards of glass rained on them both, and burning oil poured out onto the monster. He fell to the ground and watched the thing wrestle with the fire, which had spread all over its body.

Approaching lights flickered from inside the tunnel. There were more of them. Gabriel let out a desperate scream, scrambled out of the cave, and ran as fast as his wounds would let him. He fled through the dark forest, making his way back to Altstadt. As he reached the brook he stopped and felt the

madness within him burn his senses. He stumbled into the water and submerged himself. The cold water calmed him. He drifted face down in the water, letting the gentle stream pull at his body.

I can end it all, he thought. If I stay like this, it will all go away. Is this what father had done? Maybe he wasn't killed by that thing. Maybe he witnessed the horror, ran away, and killed himself.

He turned himself over and continued to float on his back. Orion, the Hunter, ruled the starry sky above him.

Gabriel refused to join his father and pulled himself up and out of the dark cold water.

Epilogue

Today I planted an apple tree by mother's grave. It was a nice day, but it started to rain in the afternoon. I met Elise, she was there with her family burying that mean brother of hers. Hopefully things will be better for her now. Otherwise it was an ordinary day: Gabriel got the watch going, but it still doesn't work very well. He calls the watch Herbert, since it says so on the lid. It makes me sad to think that Gabriel will be leaving soon. He said he will wait for the Englishman to come down from Brennenburg and then take him back west. I hope the Englishman enjoys himself so much that he never leaves the castle.

Jakob's Diary

